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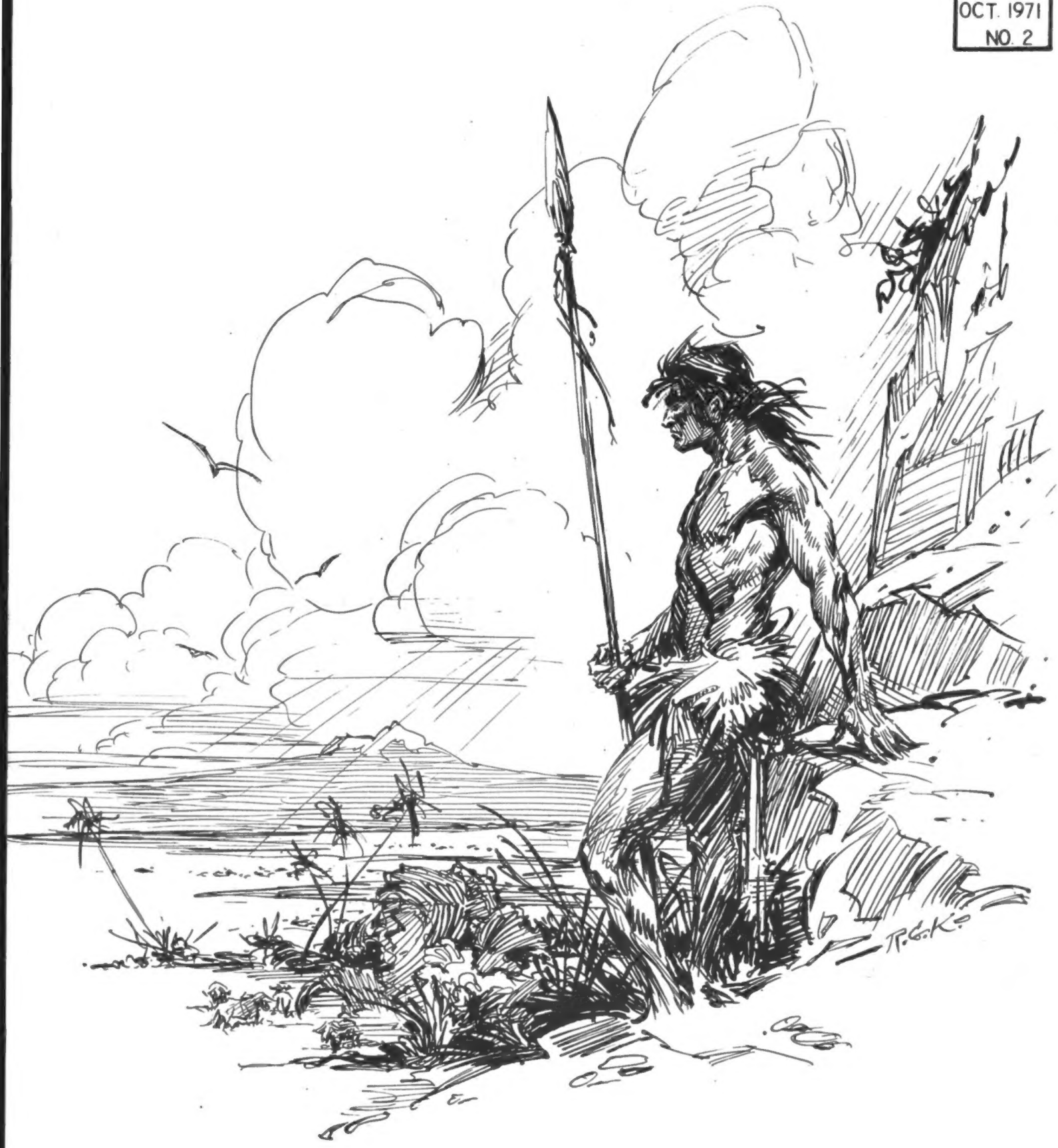

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THE WANDERING FAN

BY TONY ISABELLA

It's a lazy September morning, and I'm feeling pretty good for this early in the day. There's a cool breeze blowing in from Lake Erie--I live about two miles from a relatively clean piece of that far-famed water way--through my window. *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* printed my full-page article on *Green Lantern* this Monday, which I have given editor Brancatelli permission to reproduce with in these esteemed pages (Ed. Note: never one to pass up an article, Tony's story will appear next issue. -JB). The article will pay for the new shelves I put in for my collection. Fandom giveth and fandom taketh away. In all, a pretty wonderful week. And how are you?

I think I'll start this month with a moment of clarification, Wally Stoelting's comment that I went pro. In a sense, I am a professional writer. Although my living income comes from my editorial assistant's job at the *Plain Dealer*, I do write for dollars occasionally. I've ghost written for people and I have done other writing for the paper and for local magazines. I have not written for comics as of yet. This misinformation is not Wally's fault. It was printed as such in *Minotaur* and I should have made myself more clear at the time.

Not that I wouldn't like to "go pro" in the sense that Wally means in his kind comments about my work. I'm cutting out those smaller writing jobs to concentrate on a few things that pay more--like articles in newspapers--and using whatever free time this gives me to write things like this--which pay nothing except that inner glow of having brightened somebody's drab existance--and comic strips for zines like *Minotaur*--to practice my techniques of comics writing. Should some sage editor buy my work for the four-color frivolities, I can say, with reasonable accuracy, that you'll hear about it.

Get on your MINO, get set...

Speaking of *Minotaur*, friends, I will be doing a lot of comic scripts for that zine in the months to come. *Minotaur* and the BPP are unique zines and you'll see how unique shortly. BPP's floundering father, Carl Gafford, and myself have been working on a tale to end all tales. It's spread out over several issues, and what we are doing won't be evident for at least half those issues. Though my word might be biased as I'm personally involved, I'm of the opinion that you wont want to miss what's coming. You can get #13 for 40¢ from BPP; 140 Lone Oak Drive; New Milford, Connecticut, 06776. And while your at it, why not write Carl or myself and tell us what you think.

Canadian-Style Satire

Moving to the current comics scene, Ron Liberman just sent me the first issue of a Canadian political humor magazine, *Fuddle Duddle*. Even if you're only vaguely familiar with Canadian politics and political figures of today, I think you'll find *Fuddle Duddle* worth the paltry 25¢ that JRD Publishing Company asks. The art is wonderful, in a Mort Drucker style and the satire is hilarious. The premiere issue is available from JRD; P.O. Box 461; Station A Ottawa; Canada P.C. KIN 852 for 25¢. Recommended.

Korean-Style Terror

If it's still on the stands when you get this, I highly suggest you pick up a copy of *Ghostly Tales #91* with Sanho Kim's full book novel, "The Bloody Mermaid". Sanho Kim has been turning out really facinating stuff for Charlton for years now, and is hardly ever mentioned in the fanzines. Here is a man who grew up with a comic book medium entirely different than our American comics. He tells his stories differently, perhaps better. Frankly, here is a story-teller that bears watching. He could be the best.

Good Old American Fun

And lest we forget our American craftsmen, I have to give well-deserved kudoes to Nelson Bridwell, Gil Kane, and Roy Thomas. They've given us some cherished moments of laughter this week; and those moments are all too few.

In *DC Special* #15, Nelson Bridwell collects five of those unbelievable Jack Cole Plastic Man stories. They are wild. They're wonderful. They're nonsensical forays into chaos. But I have not enjoyed a comic book more since...

Spider Man #103. King Kong vs. SpiderMan. It's all here in four colors. J. Jonah Jameson does a magnificent job in his major role as Carl Denham. Gwen Stacy is great as Ann Darrow. And this one is *the* Marvel to read this month. Roy Thomas and Gil Kane did it again.

Use The Right Tool...

Has anyone besides myself noticed how much better the work of John Buscema is in

the *Avengers #94* than it has been since he took over the pencilling chores on *Fantastic Four* and *Thor*? I'm working on a theory here, a theory that comic magazine publishers may find it to their advantage to use artists on strips that the artist can really get into. Did Gil Kane's later *Green Lantern* work come anywhere near his *Captain Action* work? Has John Romita done *SpiderMan* recently with half the excitement he puts into *Capt. America* the past few issues? Isn't Gene Colan getting bored with *Daredevil* as of late.

Dynamic drawing is what sells comics, my friends. That's what has kept Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko on top of the heap but no artist can get excited about a strip he does not like or a strip he's gotten bored with. I would like to see more artist switchs to new or different strips and keep switching until they find one they really want. The right tool for the right job.

Bummer of the Month

This month's coveted bummer of the month award goes to the DC staffer that chose to reprint "The Cosmic Idiots" in issue #207 of *World's Finest*. The story speaks favorably of political assanination (if done by the good guys). Right on, DC.

That's it for this issue, heroes. Remember to send those new character creations for the DESCRIPTIVE DREADNOUGHT CONTESTS. Just create a character with a descriptive name (Example: The policeman of the 1900's--Officer Billy Clubb of the Curbstone Cops) and send it to me, Tony Isabella, at 11203 Peony Avenue in beautiful Cleveland, Ohio, the mistake on the lake. Zip code is 44111.

The first prize winner will get the worst page of artwork Jim Steranko ever did for Marvel Comics! You don't believe it? Well, take a look at *X-Men #51*, page 14. Isn't it putrid? This comic page has a thousand uses it does. Blackmail Steranko with it by threatening to put it on the open market. Use it for a booby prize. Keep the kids quiet by letting them color it. Wow!

The second prize is the Bill Stillwell drawing that this zine used for the back cover last issue. How many other contests do you know of where the second prize is better than the first?

Transilvane lives in the hearts of *Comic Fandom Monthly*, your cheap columnist, your extemporaneous editor, and the rest of those gruesome ghouls in tis zine. Back next ish.

STORY & ART: SANHO KIM

PART OF PAGE 16. GHOSTLY TALES 91

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TERATOLOGY

BY MARK EVANIER

On past occasions, when a fanzine editor has solicited an article from me, I've usually acquiesced with little or no fervor. This, however, is the first time that the editor ever kidnapped one of my relatives. He said that if I failed to contribute, I'd never see this kinship alive again. To make matters worse, Brancatelli won't even tell me which of my relatives is on the stretch rack in his basement, so I'm uncertain as to what kind of trade I'm getting involved in by writing this. In Europe, they have much the same arrangement, you'll note, but they call it chemin de fer and omit the kidnapping and the article from the procedure.

The first issue of *Comic Fandom Monthly* was quite a surprise as it fell into my mail box and I do owe Mr. Brancatelli (ed. note: Mr.?) a big apology for missing the deadline. (I guess I also owe an apology to that relative in Joe's basement for taking so long to bail him or her out!) But it's good to see fandom actually has a good article zine, as opposed to the many, exorbitant art zines filled with two-page, incoherent drawings by the same old people. A few points in that first CFM must be responded to and then onward with our regularly-scheduled column.

One Norman Masters (there are no others I know of) took me to task for an anti-Marvel quote in the lettercol of *Mr. Miracle #4*. Be advised first, Norman, that I didn't write that line, nor did mein comrade, Steve Sherman. But I'll gladly defend its being there by pointing to the context which you wholly disregarded in quoting it. It was in respon se to a letter which wondered, as have many we've received--too many to neglect--how, much Jack Kirby has to do with the storyline in his marvel work. The response (added by someone else at the last minute after ours was deemed "unclear") was not a stab at Marvel's quality, nor was it exemplary of any feeling of inferiority. It was a commentary on Marvel's system of credits, not their quality which I certainly would not think to discuss in a D.C. letter column. Reread that letter and its response and I think you'll see that the passage in question--while not being as self-explanatory as it should have been--is not at all an opinion on the contents of Marvel's books. It's rather, a simple way of pointing out that Kirby contributed a great deal of ideas & thoughts to Marvel, something which Stan Lee at least, has never kept a secret.

Also, in case Joel Packer and Steve Jenkins haven't figured it out yet, "Jon Costa" is, in reality, D.C. letterer John Constanza plying his trade at Marvel. It's great revelations like that which will make this column an integral part of future issues of CFM to come.

Now, as Hitler's father said to Hitler's mother on their honeymoon, it's time to create a little Fhuerer!. (The preceding pun is hereby apologized for.) I'd like to point up first that, among the very few article zines which fandom has, the same names are constantly rehashed--Kirby, Frazetta, Steranko, Adams...with due respect to all gentlemen, some of their work has been discussed ad nauseum, with the critics' insight being quite limited. We would now like to begin what may well be termed the *Unsung Hero* section of this fanzine, by spotlighting the works of artists and writers who are not subjects of endless discussions, beginning with Russ Heath.

Among the men who illustrate what few war comics remain, the "top three" probably number Kubert, John Severin, and our subject, who has been gracing the pages of *G.I. Combat*, *Our Army at War*, and other D.C. combat titles for many years now. Heath's approach, is highly "photographic" and generally, a term such as that would denote a bad comic artist. But, in this case, Heath is in control of his photo-references and not dependent upon them. His masterful usage of shadows has yielded atmosphere without sacrificing clarity. That's not the most prevelant talent in the field, as witness Adams' and Morrow's works. Perhaps Heath's most outstanding job was in the fourth and final issue of Warren's *Blazing Combat*. He utilized doubletone-craftint of a fine screen; and achieved some remarkable shading effects with it. The story-telling facility of the art is not impaired. The action in every panel is quite well-defined and there is emotion, where necessary. (As in keeping with the type of soldier he usually draws, facial expressions are generally underplayed--but not so subtle as to be lost.) Perhaps, the single-most page of note by Russ Heath, in recent times, is page three in *G.I. Combat* #148. Though certainly less pretentious in design than most other artists' memorable pages, Heath's explosion scene gets the point of the page across so perfectly as to achieve a goodly degree of dynamicism in a two dimensional media.

That Bill Draut should be classified as

Heck is miscast when he inks his own super-heroes.

an "unsung hero" is rather surprising to me because his work has been seen so often in comics for twenty years and has always been very good. Draut is a real specialist in *unspectacular design*. By this, I mean that he tells a story in simple, basic terms and usually achieves greater success than those who attempt more complex breakdowns. Seen to best advantage recently in D.C.'s *House of Mystery and House of Secrets*, Draut is also an artist who can draw, and he seems to pay much more attention to the script than many other artists. Inked by Tom Palmer (apparently) in *House of Mystery #193*, his work looked quite good and another story, two issues before worked very well. While I would think that Draut more suited for super-hero material, (his work on *Teen Titans* and on Harvey stuff would bear this out) his weird stories are quite exceptional in that they achieve an eerie mood, not by the external factors (heavy shading, ghastly contortions) but internally, by facial expression and simplicity in design. Draut is an artist anyone can enjoy, despite simplicity at times.

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Top: Heck on Batgirl, 1971. Inks and pencil by Heck; Left: Heck on Mystery, 1961, pencils and inks; Right: Heck pencil, Stone inks on 1965 Avengers.

Slurs, last issue, directed at Don Heck might well be answered in this department, now. Recent Heck work at D.C. has been notable, but not necessarily good, because of the treatment given to it by colorists. Heck is a sketchy artist, true, and his art is far from slick in its line work. Still, it worked quite well at Marvel with bright coloring, as opposed to the muted shades (mostly dull greens and purples) being used on it at D.C. and in Marvel's mystery titles. Some one, somewhere, recently decreed that stories of an eerie nature (*House of Mystery, Batman, etc.*) should be colored in that manner and that real flesh tones, bright shades and tones, should be eliminated, even if a particular scene in the subject matter called for it. This practice has hurt Heck's art, but his romance work, which receives bright coloring, is quite good. When he was on the *Avengers*, Heck handled some difficult intergrations of character and setting, all quite well, but always had the air of someone very miscast on super-heroes when he inked his own work. Inked by Giacoia or Romita (on one fine story in *Avengers*) it worked in very well. But *sketchy* renderings of super-heroes were not very prevelant then, as they are now, and I'm not certain that--at either time--they are popular. As a designer, Heck does very well and his romance stories are *very readable*--and that's a high compliment. I'd doubt, though, that he has been given a single opportunity on recent assignments to really demonstrate that he is one artist who really knows how to draw.

This column had best come to a close lest you all begin talking like me. (you've all heard of Evanierial disease, haven't you?) But, before we depart, best wishes to Thor and Sif (also known as the God Couple, on their forty-thousandth anniversary. So, until the next time, this is Jack Narz inviting you to Beat The Clock!

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THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT, CAP... BUT I'D LIKE TO AMEND YOUR MOTION...
I FEEL THAT STARK HIMSELF WOULD WANT US TO CONTINUE ...TO STAY ON DUTY IN CASE WE'RE NEEDED!
SO I MOVE INSTEAD THAT WE VOTE IRON MAN A TEMPORARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE... UNTIL HIS MISSION IS DONE!
I SECOND GIANT-MAN'S MOTION!
YOU'RE OUT OF ORDER, RICK! YOU HAVE NO VOTING PRIVILEGE WITH THE AVENGERS AS YET!
HOWEVER, ONCE AGAIN I AGREE WITH THE MASTER OF MANY SIZES! IF THE CHAIR WILL PERMIT, I WITHDRAW MY MOTION AND SECOND GIANT-MAN'S!

4 COLOR CARNIVAL

BY STEVE JENKINS

A NOT VERY DEFINITIVE, BUT SLIGHTLY TONGUE-IN-CHEEK LOOK AT... FLASH&DALE&MING&ZARKOV

Outside the Bluegate Theatre, the Flash Gordon serial is announced rather colorfully though definitely small. But then, the whole theatre was rather small. I doubt whether it could seat a hundred at peak capacity. The Bluegate is one of the N.Y. Greenwich Village theatres that have been showing an array of fantastic old films including an entire festival devoted to W.C. Fields films. It ran over a month concurrent to the Flash Gordon serial. To any New York based fans, or fannish visitors, I strongly suggest an attempt to make some of these theatres that show these classics. The stuff shown is so great that the small facilities can easily be overlooked.

The sound system was poor as the film was old. Several times the film ripped and at one time there was a fifteen minute delay as the tape ripped entirely, and had to be repaired. Luckily I got a 1st row seat and the view was fantastic. As all true blue Flash Gordon followers know, the Flash Gordon serials are short, so the entire show did not last two hours. It's in black and white, of course.

Thrilling is one word I could use to describe the serial itself. Each short chapter ends with Flash hanging from spacecrafts or falling into pits that extend to the inner depths of the earth only to survive time and time again. One chapter ends with him and his party, including Dale Arden "girl wonder"--who is to Flash Gordon as Lois Lane is to Superman--crushed in the falls of an avalanche of snow. Yet he survives! The spacecrafts that are used are of two designs--the Flash Gordon model and the Ming model--which of course, divide into the black and white catagories of good guy and bad guy. All good guys drove Gordon models, all baddies drove a Ming special. As far as bad guys go, who could be worse than Ming the Merciless? He's the inter-planetary Manchu Terror. He seems to be a perfect copy of the Chinese devils portrayed in the pulps. In any event, Ming and his bald cranium extend the beauty of his wickedness. And while on the subject of horrific charm, how about that perfectly bad guy beard. I wonder who was his make-up man in the serials. Lin Carter perhaps. Ming, of course, couldn't have been his wicked lil self if not for his vicious sidekick, Torch. Torch must have attempted to kill Flash a dozen times and never succeeded. Although the penalty for failure with Ming was death, Torch always seemed to get a second chance, and a third and a fourth...

Ming was a vicious rat fink who had some lusty (if you classify it as such) desire for old Dale. Though it was never said, from what I gather, Ming must have had quite a harem even without Dale. He always had a 100 or so girls dancing at one time or another, and they were always stopped by a sexy girl in a low cut dress banging a ten-foot China-gong.

One thing that I noticed as I watched the six by six screen was that you must look at Ming's throneroom closely several times to get the full effect. The entirety of Ming's palace is amazing. Plain it wasn't! Above the merciless one is a gargoyle and if I did not know better I'd assume it took some fine sculpter months to produce. Paper-maiche to be sure, but oh, the beauty of it. If those props hadn't been done away with long ago, I would surely like to acquire some. And not just for nostolgia, either. One other thing that caught my attention, and that of the entire audience--attention in the sense that they laughed themselves silly--was a brown-nosed attendant to Ming who had peacock feathers on the top of his crown. He only wore it once. I can't argue with his judgement.

Well, now that I've given you my own observations, perhaps I should tell you about the flick objectively(?) The serial was called *FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE*, but the first six chapters which were shown that night could have been more aptly called *THE Purple Death*. It was the last of the Flash Gordon Serials.

As the story opens, we can't understand a word that is said. Luckily, they included a visual prologue to the story, and we managed to keep up with the story. It appears that one of Ming's stock-in-trade mad scientists has discovered some strange formula that gives you bad breath. (Laugh, this is a *comic* fanzine!) (Ed. note: who else would make a bad pun after a bad joke? -JB) Serio-

CON'T PG. 10

"Seeing Byrrah in Frigia wouldn't surprize me at all."

osly, though, Ming somehow transports this "Purple death" and inflicts it on the unsuspecting earth populous. Flash and his little group, including Dale and Zarkov are unaffected, of course. So Zarkov and Flash depart for Mongo, reaching there with a minimal amount of trouble. Later they meet and greet Prince Barin who, to me, looked like a Robin Hood rip-off. After Prince Barin, they meet up with the queen of Frigia. Frigia is a land of intense cold, which naturally, no human can survive. Apparently, Queenie's minions can, because they're cheap Sub-Mariner copies. Seeing Byrrah there wouldn't surprize me. The Queen is out for Flash, but Dale, in her own feminine ways, tells her to buzz off.

Petty squables aside, the merry band all get together to fight with ol' Ming and my friend, the captain, Torch. Simultaneously, Zarkov saves Flash from the aformentioned bottomless pit of Mongo. And the good Barin, who ran away from the fight (he was yaller), discovers the only way to offset the purple death is with a compound found high in the Frigian mountains (some irony, eh?). Prince Barin escapes with the rest of the group but not before they save a Frigian general and a man from Prince Barin's army. Naturally they all make it back to Barin's castle where the Queen is told of the group's trials, tribulations, and good luck in discovering the cure. The Queen quickly dispatches them. Let us remember, however, that the Frigian atmosphere in northern Mongo is quite incompatible to humans. True, but don't forget, that this is a movie, and a movie with a man with a medical degree. That's right, good ol Doc Zarkov, who naturally has a suit of protection against the extreme. Meanwhile, back at that castle of Ming the Merciless, news has reached them that Flash knows the cure, and Ming dispatches Torch with the admonition "that if you fail..."

Flash, Dale and Mr. Barin go off into the mountains as Zarkov and an old general hang out at the ship. Sometime later, after Dale has slipped and been saved by Flash, Torch and his two baddies find the dauntless trio trudging through the snow. Of course, Torch, lacking the genius of Zarkov, can't go outside his ship. Guessing marvelously, he now realizes Zarkov has immunized Flash, Dale, and the Prince from the cold, and resorts to germ warfare (obviously the Geneva convention didn't hold sway there). Torch causes an avalanche of rocks to boot. Zarkov, of course, is viewing this scene with much dismay. In any case, Torch ends the chapter by thinking, how finally he hasn't let poor ol' Ming down!

In point of fact, however, he has. Flash awakes despite the numbing effect of the cold snow, not to mention the fall. Since all of the group fell together, they landed together. He finds his woman nearby, and he asks the question asked countless times in the serial. It goes something like this:

Flash: *Are you all right, Dale?*

Dale: (hugging Flash and answering sharply) *Yes!*

Together they find the Prince who's broken a few of his legs in the interim. Despite the good fortune they've had, it seems they are done for, stranded. But, Flash again saves the day with his handy-dandy Doc Zarkov communicator. Flash makes contact with Zarkov with minimal trouble (my radio should be so static free), and within a half-hour thousands of Frigians are combing the mountainsides for the group. The two questions that entered my mind was why the Frigians weren't the ones searching for the antidote in the first place, and second is why didn't the hero just go back the way he came. Well, I guess that's the way it goes in the films. Another irony (?) is that out of the thousands searching for the party, who do you think finds them? Right. Doc Zarkov!

They make it back to the Prince's castle, only to find one of his girls has been betrayed by a maid and captured by, you guessed it again, Ming! Suddenly the Prince has been completely rehabilitated. The reason for this miraculous recovery? Perhaps he did not really have broken legs, perhaps Zarkov fixed him up (Sawbones Zarkov?), perhaps the seemingly valiant old boy is a chicken in Prince's clothes; or it's even possible a scripter just forgot (a faulty memory being quicker than miracles). In any case, the heroes depart in Zarkov's ship, and move onward towards Ming's place (sounds like a bad chinese restaurant, doesn't it). They enter the castle through a back entrance known only by the Prince, but Zarkov blunders into a trap. He quickly becomes friendly with another mad scientist type. This fellow comes from still another world and was forced to work for the emperor. Their common enemy is the fusion to their relationship. The drawback of course is that Flash now has two mad scientists instead of one. Flash and Prince Barin mug a few of Torch's boys and one exciting adventure leads to another.CONT 18

BEARD MUTTERINGS II

BY NORMAN MASTERS

THE RESURRECTION OF THE HEAP . . .

I like the Heap.

I like the Heap, whereas I have never cared for the Hulk or even the Thing, and I'm not exactly sure why. Maybe it's the brutishness of Hulk and Thing--a quality I've never been able to identify with--that turns me off. The Heap, for some reason, does not affect me as being brutish; he is sensitive in a way Hulk and Thing can never be; his inner soul is different from his frightening exterior. I realize Stan has tried to make Thing into something more than an unfeeling monster, but I guess it's just failed to convince me. The Thing still revels in "It's clobberin' time!" making his inner spirit like his outer appearance to my final evaluation. The soul trapped inside the putrescent body of the Heap doesn't revel in violence, however, and unlike the Thing and Hulk, he'd prefer dying to living on like this. This is an interesting way of handling the invulnerable super-hero--he can't be killed, but he wants to die.

And maybe part of it's just that the word Heap is a much more evocative name than Thing or Hulk--to my sensibilities, at least. Of course, that's an offshoot of nostalgia. I met the Heap in about 1957 when I got a copy of the Nov. 1950 issue of *Airboy Comics* from a kid for writing some punishment pages for him in high school. That puts that Airboy comic in the charmed circle of the first hundred or so comics I ever owned or read--and there's a certain special magic attached to those first comics that no others, later, can ever equal again. Later ones may well be better plotted, better written, and better drawn, but they don't have that aura of those first ones, no matter how godawful those first ones were, and it's difficult to even view them objectively, afterwards (not that one usually wants to most times.)

I muchly prefer the appearance of the original Heap to that of the current incarnation (tho this may be the *Firstist Syndrome* at play. There's some that feel SpiderMan only looked right when Steve Ditko was drawing him, and Flash Gordon, to me, is epitomized by Mac Raboy--since that's where I met him, and the Hal Foster and Al Williamson renditions just don't have that magic...) The original Heap was long and shaggy haired, also built like an ape, and strongly resembled an abominable snowman, albeit tinged with chlorophyll. It seemed singularly appropriate for this green thing to have come out of the swamps of Poland (where we're somewhere near werewolf country), product of vines and creepers covering and merging with the body of shot-down WWI ace, Eric Von Emmelman. I guess the current Heap looks appropriate, for his time, too (much of his appearence turns me off), being a product of nerve gas and pesticides transmuting the body of Jim Roberts into what looks like either a pile of garbage or a shambling glop of shit. Symbolic of the excretions of our age, in a small way. The first Heap had a bit more of an endearing appearance--a hooked root nose, much like a carrot --not the current one's savage apeish one. You never saw the eyes of that other Heap--shaggy-dog-like hair hung over them; and there was never a mouth drawn on him, either. The new Heap has glaring eyes, with two small dots for pupils, and an always-open mouth, spiked with sharp fangs. (The flapping tongue, ready to be bitten off at any moment, that's perpetually hanging outside his mouth in the Andru-Esposito treatments in *Psycho*, is vaguely reminiscent of the original Heap's nose for some reason. Actually, Gray Morrow's rendition of Man-Thing in *Savage Tales #1* comes closer to the spirit of the original Heap in one sense, and it's the most artistic-pleasing of the whole lot, but

Top: Andru and Esposito's Heap, for Skywald Publishing. Copyright © 1971. Bottom: Airboy comics featured a Heap in the 1950's. Copyright ©, 1950, Hillman Per.

there are too many precise details to Man-Thing for the kind of origin he and the Heap had. Both Heaps in their amorphous blobbishness, seem more appropriate.)

How did the original Heap stories compare to the current one? Not as smoothly told, but I'll probably always be fond of that first one. The story opens with a stubborn father and his son, who the Count accuses of being a coward. Franz, due to his father's folly, is bitten by werewolf, therefore becoming a werewolf himself. Later he becomes a World War I pilot who crashes because he's forced to fly when the moon is full (and, of course, turns into a werewolf at the control panel). His old friend, Eric Van Emmelman, watches his crash, which leaves him open to be shot down, which he is. Emmelman plunges into the swamp of Wassau and emerges as the Heap. Then he is drawn back to Hungary.Then he extracts retribution on his friend's father, and, on the last page, is attacked by a wolf which he chokes to death. In the last memorable panel stands the Heap, holding the body of his dead friend Franz, the werewolf curse lifted from him because his father is dead.

The story was a little weak in its lack of adherence to typical werewolf lore, but, if nothing else, in simply breaking the set pattern it maybe gains thereby.

The only other original Heap story I have is in the Oct. 1951 issue of *Airboy*. It's pretty inferior. The Heap battles a plant gone wild. This scienctist's assistant, see is going to prove he's the greatest botonist in the world... However, when I chanced upon that issue, my susceptibility to the emotional aura that makes for a personal golden age was gone.

The new Heap--in *Heap #1*--had its touch of human pathos, as did that first Heap saga I read. The blind girl bit (in *Heap #1*) is an old plot device, but it works, occasionally on this heart of anthracite...

I also happen to enjoy the villains the new Heap is dealing with for--again--I suspect have become nostalgic reasons. There were few chances to read comics between 1952 and 1957. In the earliest of them, about the only time there was any opportunity was when our whole family went over to visit Uncle Marion's (who let his kids buy and own comics). About one time a year, we would get over there to visit, and I, hardly able to restrain myself, would start looking around the place for comics, throwing myself into the spell of those multi-colored pages as soon as I latched on to a couple. Trouble was--all Uncle Marion's kids bought were the awful horror comics--and I hated them. But being as they were the only things available at the moment, I still read them, filled with dread, praying for just one happy ending. (one time I thought--this one has to end happily! The guy's telling it in the first person, so he still has to be alive at the end; so for once everyone isn't going to be horribly killed off! Ah, but I was innocent and naive then. Indeed he was alive at the end--or should I say it was alive at the end--but when he saw his reflection he sure was wishing he wasn't...) I would have nightmares after coming home from Uncle Marion's those times (the most memorable being swept downstream and drowning in a river of blood), but at this late date in time, almost 20 years later, even those frightfully dreadful pages have taken on an aura of nostolgia. At any rate, villains like the Scythe and the Horror Master (particularly that latter with the page of resurrected corpse-portraits of Rasputin, Hitler,Caligua, Lucretia Borgia, etc.) have a reminiscent air of those old pages I detested so fully then. Ah yes, those evocatively mouldering flesh-dripping corpses...

So I guess I mainly like the Heap for old time's sake--which, I have to admit, is as good a reason as any. I have reservations about whether it's really any good or not--measured on any scale of quality--but why-bother trying to evaluate it that way, anyway, if you're enjoying it.

BRING BACK MORE PEOPLE TO BE "CONVERTED" WHEN YOU KILLED HIM! NOW YOU ARE THE LEADER. IT IS YOUR PLACE TO GO! LET ME BE THE ONE TO POINT THE WAY...

Opposite: Top: Hillman's Heap as he appeared in 1953. Bottom: Skywald's Heap in 1971. All characters © 1971 their respective publishers, all rights reserved.

THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET

FREDRIC WERTHAM, M.D.

DR. WERTHAM is one of the foremost psychiatrists in the world and generally recognized as the authority on violence, a field he has pioneered for years and about which he has written many books, articles and essays. His most recent work is A Sign For Cain: An Exploration of Human Violence.

> If the trumpet give an uncertain sound,
> who shall prepare himself to the battle.
> I Corinthians

We live in an age of classified movies and classified information. The juxtaposition is not as far-fetched as it seems. A lot of classified material in Washington deals with violence, and so do many films. We haven't much chance to ask questions about classified information (Green Berets, etc.); but we can question the rating system of presentations on the screen.

What the classification of movies has accomplished is that it has pacified critics. That was its purpose and that is its achievement. In reality the rating system is a mixture of makeshift and make-believe—makeshift because it is not by any means a decisive step, and make-believe because it claims to be one. It means trifling with serious problems while leaving the issues unresolved. As Bertolt Brecht wrote:

> "We are left to see perplexed and nettled
> The curtain down and no questions settled."

In the background of movie classification and its evaluation after a year's time are two extreme social attitudes, two pressure systems one might say, meteorologically speaking. One is moral indignation, which the philosopher Max Scheler has said is part of middle-class psychology and often represents a disguised form of repressed envy. This attitude asks for repression *à tout prix,* legal repression. At the other extreme is the fashionable pseudolibertarian view according to which films are merely fiction and therefore harmless; that they have no bad effects and whatever effects they may have are too trivial to bother with. Moreover our democratic freedom demands that "we must run the risk of a child seeing a hurtful movie." All this has been said and written many times. What is asked for by this attitude is the complete absence of all restrictions, voluntary or legal. It is very much like the escapism of absolute pacifism, which leaves untouched all concrete questions about why wars start and why they can't be ended.

If you speak to the average solid intellectual about the excess of brutality and cruelty in some movies and indicate that there is a problem, the chances are—as I have often found—that he will immediately respond "Censorship is not the answer." This is true enough. Censorship is not the answer; it is not even the question. Speaking of movies Al Morgan, the former producer of the *Today* show, recently wrote: "We react to one word the way the Wolf Man used to react to a sprig of wolfbane over the heroine's door. The word of course is *censorship.*" To balance it off, he suggests introducing another word, *responsibility.*

There is little display of responsibility in the rating system. With one stroke it sweeps all problems under the rug. It does not admit that there is anything whatsoever wrong. It merely wants to appease the "unnecessary concern" of parents and Nervous Nellies like myself. Far from attempting to change anything, it preserves the *status quo* with its inevitable crescendo of what is euphemistically called permissiveness, or naively, liberty.

CONTINUED

The linking of sex and violence in this rationale of rating is misleading. It is wrong, both theoretically and practically, to think of them as if they belonged together and were strictly comparable. It obscures the whole issue. In practice it means overemphasizing sex, which is titillating even when being condemned, and underrating violence. Sex is pleasure, violence is pain. The mechanism of the effects of their presentation is entirely different. It seems that the classifiers in their global evaluation have taken a cue from some of the hysterical anti-pornography legislation which makes it appear that nudity and murder are equally dangerous. And what happens is that sexual obscenity is decried while brutality is accepted. With all this talk about nudity we are apt to forget that even a clothed girl should not be beaten or sadistically abused or killed.

If we want to deal realistically with effects, we have to distinguish three categories:

I non-violent unsadistic sex
II violence + sex, which is sadism
III non-sexual violence

There is a wide field in which we do not know what representation may be a factor for stimulation sexually, normal or abnormal. Gordon Craig, the pioneer of the modern theatre, recorded that reading Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata* at the age of 17 "sent me into a high fever and awakened sexual desires which were really difficult to combat." Yet this novel is known to generations of readers to be of the highest ethical type.

It is very different with sadism. With scientific clinical methods it is demonstrable that representations of sadistic scenes can have harmful effects. A movie like *The Penthouse* which makes sex violent and violence sexy can give the immature very unhealthy first (yes, first!) suggestions or reinforce significantly pre-existing ones. As Al Morgan writes, satirically, some movies should have been classified as "S" for sadism.

Violence in the movies, cold, cruel, ruthless violence and torture, is a matter for itself. You cannot take that up apart from what goes on in the community itself. It is part of a broad spectrum of violence-stimulating influences in the mass media. They make violence acceptable, attractive and even advisable as a method. It disturbs all human relations. Being a higher art form than other mass media, the film is even more potent. The movies do not operate in a vacuum, they function in a market dominated by the vendors of violence. It is frivolous not to acknowledge the connection between this mass conditioning and what goes on in life around us. Violence, mimed and real, is contagious. Classification cannot diminish, far less stem, this flood.

Any good principle can be abused. The protection of the young is one such principle. Of course they should be protected from being exposed to excess violence presented as alluring ("hard action adventure"), sadism depicted as an exciting exercise, sexual perversities, in which they can get eventually stuck, shown as thrilling experiences. Of course children are adversely affected by all this. What they can see in some of our modern movies has made them apt to confuse courage with cruelty, sex with sadism. That harm has never been acknowledged by the creators of the classification scheme. They are still waiting

CONTINUED ON 19

FANZINE WATCH

BY WALLY STOELTING

ROCKET'S BLAST--ALONE NO MORE !

Ah, remember the days when you had to buy *The Rocket's Blast Comicollector*? Apparently Gordon B. Love's adzine is going still full tilt, but there are now two relatively new adzines on the market that deserve getting. One is *The Buyer's Guide For Comic Fandom*, and the other is *Stan's Weekly Express*.

The *Buyer's Guide* is not yet one year old and is published by Alan Light, DynaPubs Enterprizes, RR #1, Box #297, East Moline, Illinois, 61244, and is free to anyone on demand. I have not been able to contact Alan, but I'm sure he would not mind a short paragraph on his prize publication. TBG comes in newspaper size (11"x17"), and reaches a proported thirty-five hundred customers per issue. TBG is almost solely a comics oriented adzine, though EC, horror and pulps have carved a small niche, and are growing. Since it is free, you can't beat the price. It's not too bad, no matter how you look at it.

Stan's Weekly Express is older than the *Buyer's Guide*. It's circulation, I gather, is approximately the same as TBG. Stan Blair runs WE, and does so well. WE, as opposed to the *Buyer's Guide* doesn't stop at comics, and frequently has issues filled with just pulp ads. In the past few issues, Stan's WE has carried con reports, an interview with Jack Kirby, a letter by dealer Howard Rogofsky, and an answering letter by associate editor Bruce Hamilton. In the future, items such as these will appear in a special zine, while WE sticks to ads only.

Perhaps the biggest advantages of WE (besides the ads, of course) are the WRB and the WSA. WRB is the WE Reporting Bureau. WRB reports on people who try to, let us say, get away with not being legal. WE has helped to expose at least one mail fraud and has helped to clear up cases which were "hazy". It helps the guy who has sent in a $50 dollar order and never receives it. (For a more complete report on WRB and WSA see *Dealer Watch* by Stan Clish in *COMIC FANDOM MONTHLY #1*.) Also, the WSA is the WE Seal of Approval. WSA is a pledge to observe certain rules concerning mailing and business procedures. Such as, if you put an ad in *Weekly Express*, you should answer any letters sending money and asking for your merchandise. After obtaining the seal from *Weekly Express*, you may use the WSA anywhere you advertise or write letters. This seal shows that you, the WSA holder, are doing your best to get your product to your customer as soon as possible and in as good a condition as possible. It also shows that if you, the customer, do not receive your merchandice, *Weekly Express* may be able to give you some help in getting it or a refund through WRB. Of course, regular channels, such as writing letters to the advertiser, should be used at all times before anyone jumps to conclusions. (I know of that from personal experiences.) A subscription to *Weekly Express* is four issues for $1, thirteen for $2.50, or twenty-six issue for $4.00. You can buy We from *Stan's Weekly Express*, Box #207 (Davue Station), Dayton, Ohio, 45406. This is a good buy, one that should not be missed. Try four issues!

Now, on to some regular reviews...

Minotaur #13 from Carl Gafford, 140 Lone Oak Drive, New Milford, Conn., 40¢. If my review last issue didn't sell you on *Minotaur*, then buy this one and know! Issue 13 contains a "Star-Boy and Mysticist" strip by Tony Isabella and Joe Jenkins, two Sheldon Wiebe vampire stories, the usual loc's, and a twenty page "Hermat-Bobcat" strip by Jenkins and Gafford. The covers, all four of them, are good. Gaff's *Star Trek* is the best of the lot, with Mooney's front cover being good, and someone's backcover on Japanese horror flicks being okay (though humorous), and someone else's backcover on Thongor being okay. The big thing this issue is the Hermat-Bobcat strip. Star-Boy was alright, though it seemed alot like a lead in for the "next time". Also in *Minotaur #13* is a copy of *Directions #5*, a comic letter of comment zine. This is a good zine, too, with letters by Gafford, Gordon Matthews and Jeffrey Wasserman being especially interesting. Buy it.

Anomaly #2, 75¢ from Jan Strnad, 2540 Aloma, Wichita, Kansas, 06221. This is an excellently reproduced zine with good to excellent features. One feature is by Vaughn Bode. I just happen to be a Bode fan, stemming probably from early *Witzends*. If you're not, due to being unfamiliar with his works, than buy this now, and don't bother reading

CON'T PG. 18

75 Years of the Comics come to the New York Cultural Center for 8 weeks

300 WORKS TO BE SHOWN UNTIL NOVEMBER 7TH

BY EVA R. GRUNEWALD

The comics, a medium which reaches daily into almost every home in the Western world, will be the subject of a major exhibition at *The New York Cultural Center*. The exhibition which is entitled "75 Years of the Comics," opened at the Center (2 Columbus Circle, New York City, 10019) on Wenesday September 8, for a stay of more than eight weeks, through Sunday, November 7th. Over 300 examples of comic art will be on view, Tuesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. An extensive, hard cover volume, *75 Years of the Comics*, and an exhibition poster will accompany the display.

The New York Cultural Center exhibition will mark the 75th anniversary of comics, dating from 1896 when Outcault's *Yellow Kid* first appeared in *The World* in it's definitive version (see tearsheet). Befitting a cultural phenomenon which has already spanned more than three-quarters of a century, the exhibition of comic artistry will treat the comics as a unique art form which bears examination on its own terms, not just an antecedent of other art movements, notably pop art. Covering one-half of the museum's space, or eight galleries, the exhibition will trace the history of comic art, from its beginnings in Europe and then in the United States in the late 19th century, to such contemporary manifestations of the form as the "underground" comix of 1971.

The works in the show were selected by Maurice Horn (editor of the upcoming *Spirit Magazine*), noted authority on comic art, and the author of several books on the subject. Mr. Horn, the consultant on the exhibition, noted "The New York Cultural Center presentation will be the largest, the most comprehensive and the most universal ever attempted on the subject."

All of the media in which the comics have ever been reproduced will be represented. There will be a number of pieces of original art, tearsheets from newspaper strips, actual pages from magazines and books, as well as reproductions from all of these media. The works of over one-hundred and thirty cartoonists, from the United States and all over Europe will be included. Such strips as Windsor McCay's *Little Nemo*, George Herriman's *Krazy Kat*, and Burne Hogarth's *Tarzan*, were selected primarily for their excellence of conception and execution. Others, including Sidney Smith's *The Gumps*, H.C. "Bud" Fisher's *Mutt and Jeff*, and *Superman* by Jerry Siegal and Joe Shuster, were chosen because of their social and historical importance in the development of the form.

The exhibition is broadly organized into 5 historical categories: *The Heroic Period:* the comics' origin from the 18th to the earliest 20th century; *The Great Tradition:* humor, the basic staple of the medium which reached its heyday in the twenties and early thirties; *Man and Superman:* the adventure-strip, the most significant development of the thirties and forties; *The Current Scene:* the sophisticated and intellectual comic strips of the fifties, and the new features in the sixties; *The Faraway and Farout:* the European comics of the last two decades and the emergence of the underground comix.

The above catagories are taken from a hard cover, 120 page volume, *75 Years of the Comics*, to be published by Boston Book and art Publishers and the New York Cultural Cen ter this month. The book will serve as the exhibition catalogue. In addition to the introduction: "What is comic art" by Maurice Horn, the volume contains full-color illustrations of *Yellow Kid* and *Little Nemo* on the front and back covers, and ninety-nine black and white illustrations of other comics. A poster, with a black and white reproduction of the *Yellow Kid*, specially published by the center for the exhibition will also be available. Lectures by several well-known comics' authorities will be held in conjunction with the show.

In the next issue of *Comic Fandom Monthly* we will have a full-fledged review of the exhibit. In the meantime, try not to miss the display.

Opposite: *Tearsheet from The World, Sunday, February 16, 1896, showing Richard Felton Outcault's "The Great Dog Show in M'Googan Avenue," one of three hundred works in the exhibition, "75 Years of the Comics," at the New York Cultural Center. This strip is the historic Yellow Kid,*

NOTISS
No IRON
WATCH DAWGS
AINT ALOUD TER
COMPEET FER PRIZES
IN DER MATCH CLASS
SIC EM TOWSER!
SUBSCRIBE FER DE BARK DE OFISHEL DOG PAPER
DIS IZ DER CHAMPEEN LONG DISTANCE RUNNER OF MORANSMILLEY
LAP DAWG WERY JENTEL & SENSITIP BUT SUBJECT TO NURVIS PROSTRATION
A GENUWINE DOUBLIN SETTER SETS STILL FOR 24 HOURS AT A TIME
MICKEY DUGAN'S CHAMPEEN KAT KILLER WILL TRADE FER A GOOD KNIFE

V IN M'GOIGAN AVENUE.

FANZINE WATCH, CON'T

on! Also included in *Anomaly #2* is the second part of a Robert Kline portfolio on Robert E. Howard. There is also a Kline strip which is very good. An excellent offset buy.

Flashback #1: Wood and EC. Same address as *The Buyer's Guide.* $1 per copy. This is the first in a series of Golden Age reprints from Alan Light. The second contains the Sub Mariner battling the Torch. The first issue sports poor reproduction, but the material more than makes up for it. This is where Mr. Wood was at his best, so if you're interested in great art (and can't afford the EC originals) the price is pretty cheap.

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THE SQUEELING WAS COMING CLOSER NOW! A STAMPEDING MASS OF COUNTLESS MOKOS BORE DOWN UPON THE RETURNING HUNTERS! THE HYDROGEN BLASTERS WERE USELESS! THERE WERE FAR TOO MANY TO STOP..

Yandro, lastly, a non-comics zine. From: Robert Coulson, route three, Hartford City, Indiana, 47348. This is basically a science-fiction fanzine. From my meager experience with science-fiction zines, I can't really say if this is average, poor or what. On its own merits, *Yandro* fills me with mixed reactions. Contains: reviews, letters and more reviews, big in science-fiction fandom, cover about twenty-two of the forty pages. This is here mostly to find out if any of you want science-fiction fanzine reviews at all! Let me know.

Send all fanzines to review directly to me at:

Wally Stoelting
Room 115
No. Converse, UVM
Burlington, Vermont, 05401

I apologise for some of my English this issue, but will try to do *more bester* next time. Checkmate King 2.

FLASH GORDON, CON'T

They battle back and forth until Flash jumps through a window just before Zarkov is to be eliminated by a heat ray. Barin decides to stop beating on guards long enough to break the ray's timer (I guess he wasn't a chicken after all). Ming fights back, of course, his guards using what appeared to be bazooka guns. Dale and the kidnapped girl rake their faces, however, and Ming's once fiendish grin turns dour. If you're wondering what ever happened to Zarkov, well he's tied to a couple of pillars, yelling to Gordon and company to buzz off because *he* does not think old Merciless will hurt him (odd thing to say from a man who almost got disintergrated). Well, Flash and the Barin listen to Zarkov, but mug a couple of guards on the way out, and take their uniform for future use.

After Flash's departure, Zarkov and Dale are taken to their chambers. Flash, using those swiped uniforms, rescues both Zarkov and Dale in short order, knocking off several more guards in the process. On the way, Zarkov stays behind and saves the Earth by planting the earth-saving device on Mount McKinley. Why they chose McKinley I don't know, but the height may have been a factor.

One might think that old Ming was out of tricks, but he snaps right back with a brand new menace. Now he's got a fire bomb guarenteed to blow up earth, unless, of course, earth decides to surrender. Zarkov immediately begins work on a counter-bomb. Meantime Ming sends a letter to Prince Barin declaring his intention to test the bomb in Mongo's wastelands. Ming does say, though, that theres a force on earth capable of dismantling the bomb. Once again irony butts in to make things easy. Apparently, it'll take some twenty-four hours before Ming demonstrates the bomb. Flash needs exactly twenty-four hours to get the neutralizer. And in 24 hours, Flash has done it. Zarkov, never idle in this flick, has also invented a suit in which Flash will be protected. Unfortunately for the bunch, a machine fails and as chapter six ends, Flash, Dale and Barin are apparently blown to bits.

As the chapter ended the night's showing, I realized how utterly impossible the serial would be to make today. Techniques, costumes and other assorted stuff would be better, I am sure, but it just wouldn't be Flash Gordon any more. The serials are dead, long may they live.

If this has whetted your appetite, try a copy of *Comic Crusader #11*, 50¢ from Box 132 Dedham, Mass., 02026. Marty Greim's zine is devoted strictly to Flash Gordon this issue!

for mathematical proof that can be expressed in graphs and curves. Meanwhile they are just being magnanimous. Try to tell that to an adolescent boy on whose understanding, after all, this whole rating system must rest.

The crucial point is that the exclusive emphasis on protection of youth is used successfully as an excuse and justification for unbridled license for a profusion of brutality, violence, murder, torture, cruelty and sadism. You need only label it "For mature audiences only" and you can produce a surfeit of all this in any setting you want. (The label used to be "adult entertainment.") This is presented to us under the guise of "freedom of artistic expression." It implies that society approves of violence without limitation. It legalizes operations that function on the fringes of legality. All you have to do is to "classify."

How does it work out in practice? We apply the same rule to a boy of seven and a young person who is almost eighteen! When we forbid boys of 16 or 17 to see a movie that we enjoy, we don't protect them, we slap them down. This procedure is not only absurd, it is anti-social. Instead of protecting society we either cause resentment or contempt for our rules—with cheating invited.

Some time ago I conducted a seminar in the sociology department of a high school. The rating system of movies came up for discussion. The students approved of it wholeheartedly. The X rating, they said, showed them which films were the most exciting to see. Getting into the theatre was no difficulty. (Later they described to me how it was done.)

Recently on the same day the New York *Times* had two big advertisements for violent movies. One movie was praised in large print with such descriptions as "climactic orgy that progresses from sex to wild mindless destruction," and the ad closed with the punchline "X (persons under 18 not admitted)." The other advertisement informs us that this violent movie is showing in 44 movie theatres in the New York area, praises it as featuring "PERVERSION, SADISM," and ends with the same punchline about the X rating. This is not admonition, it is advertising.

It is now 22 years since I first stated under oath that the saturation with violent images by the mass media has clinically demonstrable bad effects on young minds. It is 15 years since I concluded from my continuing researches (in *Seduction of the Innocent*) that these effects may be long-lasting, and refuted the harmless-outlet-of-aggression thesis. It is encouraging to see that—although it took a while—this has now been officially acknowledged. The President's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, in a statement dealing specifically with television but applying also to movies, reported recently in the identical words that I have been using for years, that the preponderance of available research evidence shows that screen violence has adverse effects; that the harmless-outlet theory is wrong; that attitudes are affected; that it is a contributing factor; that it is time to stop the "not proved" argument.

The makers of the classification system have not caught up with this. They say they are still entirely uncertain about whether movie violence can do harm or may actually be beneficial and cathartic. Of course this uncertainty is nothing new. Producers of films in pre-Hitler Germany were also uncertain about whether it might have an adverse effect on the German population when they made

movies showing "unheard-of cruelties" and "true ingenuity" in depicting physical tortures. What they actually did, as a pioneer sociologist of the film, Siegfried Krakauer, wrote, was to "unleash a strong sadism and an appetite for destruction."

Mr. Jack Valenti, the president and official spokesman for the Motion Picture Association of America, has stated repeatedly that we do not know anything about any harm that excessive violence and brutality in the movies can do to children. He is entirely uncertain in the matter. The effects may be bad for children—and then again they may be good for them. Mass media violence he said officially provides a release from "disturbing emotions." So sadism in the movies may be indispensable. "Nobody knows," he told an interviewer, "whether pictures harm children. . . . We have no evidence on either side." This uncertainty from which he suffers is unrelieved. "There is no substantive evidence," he tells us repeatedly. The rating system was devised only on account of "the concern of the parents." He remains completely uncertain about any possible harm because all we have is "the frail judgments of mortals." It is all "subjective"; we have "no objective tests." We don't know.

In the television field Mr. Valenti has powerful co-sufferers from uncertainty. They often express themselves in identical terms. For instance very recently a highly placed spokesman for the TV industry told a national magazine with a readership of millions: "We don't know (whether there is too much violence on TV). We aren't certain what the effect is. . . . We do know there is public concern."

I have tried to understand this predicament of uncertainty. It must be difficult to be responsible for films seen by thousands of young people and to be continuously so uncertain about whether they are good for them or harm them. The uncertainty must be unbearable. It reminds me of the man who saw a psychiatrist because he was so uncertain about whether his wife was faithful to him or not. He would have not minded if he really knew she wasn't; but the continued uncertainty was too much for him. Once he called the psychiatrist in great distress. He had seen his wife in the evening walking on the street with a man. He followed the pair to a hotel and looked through the keyhole into their room. "I could see my wife all nude," he said, "and then I saw the man all undressed, too. But then they turned off the light—and now I have that terrible uncertainty again."

That seems to me precisely Mr. Valenti's position. And any classification erected on that basis can only be ephemeral and suspect.

The Journal
of the
Producers Guild of America
Volume 11, Number 4,

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION

COMIC PODIUM

BY BOB PINAHA

Welcome back readers to this second installment of COMIC PODIUM. Read on as I envelop you with my nauseating reviews on recent comics.

The first comic being up for review this month is DC's *Adventure Comics #411*. Its top story, entitled, "THE ALIEN AMONG US", offers us a very old, old plot about a peace-loving alien monster being sought after by earth's prejudiced inhabitants. My own personal reactions to this type of story is that it came off rather well only because it had something to say in today's terms about today's prejudices. However, if not for this factor I would've thrown the book aside, tired of seeing the same old plot one too many times. (Another good factor that I neglected to mention was Supergirl's rather scanty new costume. One tends to wonder if the comics code authority would have allowed this had it not been revised. Food for thought!) The rest of the book offers an old "Legion of Super-Heroes" tale and a very well done Infantino story called "WARRIOR SHEPHERD". It impressed me greatly in that it was a smooth well-written and well-defined story which made for interesting reading.

Had it not been for the lead story in the 115th issue of *Lois Lane*, this book might have been a memorable issue in the series for some time to come. What more could you ask for in one book? Two golden age stories, featuring Lady Danger and a golden age Lois saga; a Rose and Thorn adventure; and a lead story featuring the heroine and your favorite super-hero! But, like I said, the lead story, "MY DEATH...BY LOIS LANE" marred the book because, simply it was very shallow. (I suspect the main reason this story was used was to further Kirby's story along.) Perhaps if it were booklength... The Rose and Thorn story offered us not only an interesting story-line to read, but excellent artwork to gaze at as well, courtesy of Dick Giordano. It amazes me how a strip like this, which had a rotten beginning, can evolve so swiftly into a first-rate feature--that is until the end of the story. Although interesting to read, the idea of a robot being used to catch the heroine is an idea used to the hilt in the pages of *Spider-Man*. I can only hope that DC gives a fresh new approach to this hackneyed plot. Things may change now, of course, since Poison Ivy will soon enter the strip.

Now, let's take a gander at the recent Marvel's First on Marvel's new list is one book by the name of *Marvel Triple Action*. My first impression was one of pleasure, thinking that finally the Silver Surfer has been brought back as a back-up feature in this new book. My pleasure turned immediately to disgust when I discovered that this was another reprint magazine. Needless to say, I won't go into detail on this book as you've probably read this story beforeand doubtlessly formulated your own opinions. The only memorable thing to me about this issue is the fact that it is the second time I have gotten a double cover on a comic book.

Thor #194 has got to go down in comic fandom for it's sheer lunacy. Thor fails in his quest to regain the Odin-ring, but in failing, Thor actually achieves his objective. Odin explains: "The ring doth take power--not give." In another twist, by getting rid of Loki, Odin dooms Asgard. How we won't know until next issue, but I'm not sure I want to know.

Now, for the BIG one, Kirby's *Spirit World*--one big disappointment. The stories themselves are mildly amusing, but what really killed it was that horrible blue ink! Yeech! Boy, whoever said truth is stranger than fiction were certainly wrong there.

If you're a golden age buff but can't get up the bread to buy those treasures, than I advise you to get the *DC Special #15* which reprints all golden age Plastic Man strips including the Woozy Winks origin. The story themselves are very funny and downright hilarious.

Wonder Woman #197 boasts a new change in her life. I won't go quite that far. The story simply attempts, and successfully, I might add, to give her very human emotions wherein she just gets fed up with I Ching and his philosophies after an emotional letdown. This issue also boasts being a "special" issue and in a sense I guess it is because it contains all new material. What I'd really like to see from DC is a super-hero, take Wonder Woman, f'rinstance, get a big change (as she did) and then afterwards get another big change which would catch the reader off guard. But I guess it will never happen.

Remember, comments can be sent to Joe, or to me, Bob Pinaha at:

24 Patton Drive
Sayerville, New Jersey,
08872

We'll be back next issue.

SOUNDING BOARD

BY STAN CLISH

"There is a terrible sameness about Marvel products except where Roy Thomas is involved."

COMICS-WHERE THEY'RE AT AND WHY.

Over 200 million comic books are sold each year, produced by less than 200 people, including writers, artists, and letterers working for six companies. Most are poorly compensated. Most are free-lancers paid on the average of $15 a page. In contrast, Bill Everett was getting $14 a page for pencilling and inking The Submariner and other strips in 1940. Bill Finger scripting Batman in the late thirties was getting $12 a page. Super artist/editor/writer Jack Kirby earns well over $35,000 a year-a true exception to the rule.

National sells about 70 million annually, Marvel 40 million, Archie 35 million, Charlton, Gold Key and Harvey each sell about 25 million.

Spidey is the top seller of the Marvel line. At National the all-time world champ was, and still is Superma.

The index of profit and loss for a comic book is not in sales. It is the percentage of published copies returned from the sales stands unsold. A comic that suffers returns of more than 50% is in trouble. You'll notice in the publisher's regular statements of ownership so many thousands of copies listed under office use, leftover, damaged.... They're the unsold, returned books. By studying the various statements of ownership you can gauge the future of any comic.

That's what happened to Marvel's M rated fifty-centers. *Savage Tales #1* was going to be followed by a *Dracula* and *Marvel Premiere*. Due to very poor distribution, poor shelf display (who would look for a comic in the *Life* or *Mc Call's* magazine section?) And poor response, it is doubtful that there will ever be another one. This is also a problem with Jack Kirby's *In The Days of The Mob*. Have y'all seen his second fifty-center, *Spirit World?* Fantastic! And Skywald's *HellRider*, a worthy publication, is also suffering labor pains.

Total volume of sold comix is definitely on the downside and getting worse. The Green Lantern just barely missed oblivion a few months ago. Not at the hands of some extra-galactic fiend, but because he kept returning to the D.C. dust bins. Relevancy, the Green Arrow team-up and twenty-eight year old Denny O'Neil rescued the old Green Gladiator. Superman may save this tired, old planet on a daily basis, but he can't bail out a fellow super-hero who doesn't sell.

The publishers are hurting but are scraping by on the strength(?) of reprints.

Marvel recently issued *Conan #10* with *all new comics* emblazoned on the cover. Inside it there was a pedantic Black Knight reprint from the fatuous fifties. Stan apologized editorially saying the cover was prepared before the contents. Then somebody became indisposed so they had to substitute the good Knight. I originally felt I had been had. After reading Stan's apologia I knew I had been had. Marvel's switchover to the 25¢ format is indicative of haste, money-grubbing , and overall sloppiness.

What are we getting for our cash?A month ago I could purchase a 36 page comic with all new stories and art from D.C. or Marvel. Today I pay 25¢, a 66% increase, for a book consisting of the same or less amount of pages devoted to all new material. So we're paying 10¢ more for sixteen or more pages of r-p's. That's no bargain.

The reprints are too much with us not because of reader demand, nor because their staffs can't fill the pages of the enlarged books as Marvel suggests. DC gets a little closer to the truth blaming it on inflation. Inflation does play a part. But again the fundamental reason is that comics just aren't selling. What businessman wants to explain he's cheapening his product because it is not selling? Girls and guys, it's 1946 all over

"Comics, like any other life function have become too compartmentalized."

again.

These explanations,especially Marvel's are as gossamer in a tornado. There is no groundswell in reader demands for r-p's. Note the letters to the editor columns. The editor, of course, wants to run letters impressing fandom with the great response to its r-p's. It just isn't there. Except with the Jack Kirby quadrology classics. Marvel would do better to publish their golden age backlog. Remember *Fantasy Masterpieces* of five years ago? In its early issues it reprinted some of Timely's finest golden oldies.

If Marvel's staff can't fill the pages, how about enlarging the staff or reducing the pages? Or even better quit kidding your audience with facile self-serving explanations.

Comix blasted off once more in the early sixties with an appreciation of the reader's intelligence. Now there is an undertow of cheapness, and disregard for the buyer's acuity. Especially from Marvel.

The impression fostered by Marvel, is that Kirby left the bullpen leaving a bad taste in the collective Marvel mouth. But his loss won't be felt. It's onward and upward, no-prizers! Yet I find nearly every Marvel r-p is Kirby, wholly or partly. Certainly he's the featured artist; not Colan, Trimpe, Severin et.al. Many of the Marvel newies have Kirby oriented art.

Stan Lee, as quoted in *The New York Times* of May 2, 1971 described Kirby (then with Marvel) as follows: "He is one of the giants, a real titan. He has had tremendous influence in the field. His artwork has great power and drama and tells a story beautifully. No matter what he draws it looks exciting and that's the name of the game."

White man speaks with forked tongue and cross-ciruited semantics.

There is a terrible sameness about Marvel products except where Roy Thomas is involved. Because they are all edited by Stan Lee.

The cosmic villain versus superhero who has hang-ups and a retarded fifteen year old's relationship with girls.

I respectfully submit that two or three other editors (or writers granted license) with fresh concepts be hired by Marvel, that r-p's feature more golden age material, and that sufficient funds be found and artistic freedom granted to retain the bullpen boys. It would be cheaper than losing the likes of Neal Adams, Jim Steranko, and Jack Kirby (twice).

Incidently, when Kirby first left Timely(marvel) in 1941 to join National, it was Stan Lee who took over as editor. How the lives of Lee and Kirby have interwined.

I'm fully aware that Stan is Martin Goodman's wife's cousin. Mr. Goodman is president of Magazine Management Co.(Marvel) which is owned by Cadence Industries (DC is owned by Kinney,the rent-a-car folks who also own Warner Bros.). I'm cognizant that Stan, age

IS IT LEE'S TIME?

forty-eight years has two years of a five-year contract to work out and makes over $75,000 per annum. I'm also aware of Stan's thirty years of experience in the trade, but I wonder if it's one year times thirty.

We in fandom owe much to Stan Lee. When in 1961 he began to metamorphose the Marvel line with superheroes as everyman,he may well have saved comix from being flushed down the porcelain convenience.

He is a devoted family man with a beautiful 21 year old daughter.

But each man has his own time in this life. And then the more fleet of foot (and mind) prevail.

Without question, comix are undergoing a major revolution. Revolution? Perhaps degenerating is more apt. The 25, 50 and 60 cent mags, the use of black and white and reprints.

Comics run roughly in ten year cycles. 1931: The adventure hero (Tarzan, Buck Rogers) is established. In 1941: The golden age is in full flower. Kirby leaves Timely.
1951: EC and the new wave is upon us. God! Those were and are the most beautiful comix ever to roll off a printing press.
1961: The bleak, grey chill of Novem-

"By 1976 I predict a renassance of the comic book."

ber is broken by *Fantastic Four #1.*
1971: Need I explain?

There are also five-year cycles:
1936: The first comics hit the newsstands en masse.
1946: The golden age is dead. Long live the golden age!
1956: Dr. Wertham, an overt paranois, almost single-handedly has destroyed an art form.
1966: The super-hero is king and volume is up.

By 1976, I predict a renaissance of the comic book.

Somewhere there sits a young man, in his early twenties, fiddling with a number 7 brush, toying with ideas.

In just a few short years he will come stampeding into fandom with concepts, stories and artwork that will light your fire, ignite your fuse and dry clean your shorts.

I predict that the publishers will eventually fall back on the one thing they've got going for them, yet fail to always utilize, quality.

EC will rise from the ashes.

Comix, like every other life functions have become too compartmentalized. One guy writes, another edits. Still an other pencils and somebody inks and somebody letters and somebody colors and somebody..... It's just as much an assembly line product as Campbell's soups. Had any chicken-vegetable lately?

It runs against our pride, our very nature to be but a cog in the wheel. In reaction to this compartmentalization we have hippies, communes, organic food and ecology.

We started out as a plains-dwelling creature some thirteen million years ago whose basic defense was his smell which proved repulsive to most animal life. What other animals gained by brute strength, we obtained by our first glimmerings of intelligence. We had to be all-around men, prepared for any eventuality. The most versatile survived. And for 99.9% of our existence, versatility spelled existence.

If we over-specialize we become as dinosaurs, sporting fins that have no use, bulk of no value and horns of no worth. We know what happened to them.

What in hell, you ask, does this have to do with comics?

Just this. Part of the aura of the "golden age" was generated by the artist's versatility. Many artists pencilled, inked, wrote and colored all their own stuff. Just look what Jack Kirby's turning out. I say desegregate the sausage factory and it's excelsior all the way.

On the back page of CFM 2, you'll find an uncaptioned sketch of a costumed character who has just been pushed off a building. Notice the cowl, bat cape, leotard and finned sleeves. An early Batman sketch? No. But this character has an interesting history. He's Black Bat who had appeared in the pulps from early '39 through 1953 in *Black Book Detective.* He was actually Tony Quinn, a tough D.A. blinded by a crook throwing acid whose sight had been restored when parts of a girlfriend's fathers eyes were grafted onto Tony from the old man's corpse. Not only was his sight restored, but he could see clearly in blackest night. So, on with the costume and a never-ending battle with organized thuggery.

Simultaneously, Batman plummeted into public view.

The pulp publisher, Better Publications was going to sue D.C. DC was about to sue Better Publications. But cooler heads prevailed. It was just a wild coincidence. The world of 1939 was ready for a bat-garbed crimefighter, that's all.

Next time around, I'll have a brief history of the only super-hero who actually lived! Guess Who. Keep those cards and letters coming in concerning dealers and buyers and any other subject that tickles your torso. But especially, tell me of your experiences, both bad and good with dealers and/or buyers.

Notary Sojac.

Send comment to: Stan Clish
27 Chapman St.
Brewer, Maine
04412

JACH SPAKE! by Jeffrey H. Wasserman

Hello, all. The name is quite clearly posted above, so there's no need for an introduction. As for the title, the first word is merely a slurring of my first two initials and the second is old English for spoke. Hopefully, they, and my by-line, will grace this magazine at least bi-monthly, my schedule permitting.

Pushing aside numerous catalogs and notices from Brooklyn College and NYU (as I'm in the process of registering for the former and switching to the latter), I reached my plaid suitcase. Zipping it open released the heavenly, molding smell that is created only by aging comics: a complete run of SPIDER-MAN from issue 3 to 84 with the exception of issue 10. All of which, I might add, was given to me last week.....for free! From this pile of valuable nostalgia I removed the few mags I decided to talk about.

ROLLING STONES GATHER MARVEL...

But first, there's ROLLING STONE. It isn't often that I pick up this recording enthusiasts' magazine; the last time being for the Lennon interview. This time it was for the Herb Trimpe drawing of the Hulk battering the magazine's banner. ROLLING STONE is one of those NEW YORK TIMES-sized rock 'n' roll magazines printed on newspulp.

The centerfold revealed SPIDER-MAN swinging toward a group of hoods. Steranko's AGENT OF SHIELD, Black Widow, Phantom Eagle, Mangog, Hogun, and Sif all scurrying about the title (a quote from the MMMS song). The article itself, written by Robin Green (Marvel's secretary), was basically the usual dull "insight" on the Marvel people until Herb Trimpe and Jim Steranko were discussed. It isn't too often that someone pays attention to a Bullpenner other than Stan, Roy, Neal, Johnny or the Buscemas. Here, Mr. Herb Trimpe was discussed; his good looks, his interest in flying and his toy soldiers and tanks (?).

The part of the article that did deal with Steranko started with the now familiar case of gross over-sensitivity on the part of the Comics' Code Authority: the old Nick and Val love scene with the uncradled telephone receiver that the CCA ordered hung up. To quote: "Jim Steranko said (that) after that, he got horny everytime he saw a telephone off the hook."

It then took a turn into Steranko's teen-age years where he demonstrated his, "No jail can hold me, no chain can bind me," abilities as a juvenile delinquent. Starting off as an escape artist/performer, Steranko switched trades. If anything, this particular interesting insight into Jim Steranko's life saved the article.

And where did I pick up my copy of ROLLING STONE? Merely at the one newsstand that gets more complaints for not carrying comic books than any other in New York City; the newsstand in 909 Third Avenue's lobby.

SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING...

Contrary to popular belief, there ia a SPIRIT WORLD. At least there is a magazine by that name as Jack Kirby's endeavor lends no credence for the existence of such a never-never-land. And also contrary to popular-belief, SPIRIT WORLD is not another one of those black-and-white comics. Somebody spiked the black ink with blue tint, resulting in a ridiculous riot of shades of blue battling for supremacy. A few scenes were not as clearly discernible as they could have been; a mixed blessing. The mag could've had its origins in some sort of stranger than truth column. I say that as each story is based on such a miniscule fact that it would take but a sentence or two to describe it fully, much less an illustrated adaptation. Such small facts include a clairvoyant's attempts to save President Kennedy, a haunted house, the reincarnation of an inquisitional heretic and the prophecies of a sixteenth century physician. All of which was represented as factual occurances; all of which were poorly handled.

Does Jack think that by writing endless narratives and dialogue he can save stories with weak plots; and stories based only a solitary fact each? If these past words were not kind, my opinions of the photo-illustrated story and the spirit poster would be deemed obscene.

CONT. PG. 29

VIEW FROM CANADA

BY CLIFF LETOVSKY

Being in Quebec, I have access to many French magazines. I would like to review a few which I have. I'll take your imagination thru the world of French comic art, a world of fine graphics.

Charlie, the professional fanzine, and Pilote, mind-expanding weekly art magazine, will be studied in depth.

First, Charlie. I have two issues of it. Charlie (English translation, by the way) is the magazine of humor and comic art. No censorship. It starts with a strip called "Paulette", written by Charlie's editor, Wolinski and drawn by G. Pichard. I think it was a satire, but my french is limited, so...

Next is a nicely done illustration by Guido Crepax, followed by a story (silent)by Reiser. It's a sketchy, hilarious comedy appearing in each issue. The best I've seen is one where a man and a pelican make a deal. The man climbs into the pelican's beak, and they approach another pelican. The jungle man jumps out of the pelican, clouts the other bird, and carries it away. The pelican gets paid a fish, and the two continue the act until the jungle man's acquired a tremendous amount of fish. They later share a bottle of booze, and drunk attempt another kill. The tables are turned, however. When the jungle man is just about to bop this other pelican, out pops a second jungle man, & delivers a telling blow to our heroic pair of drunks. The final scene shows a pelican walking off with a bloodied jungle man in his mouth.

Following this feature are ten pages of Peanuts (all in French). Then Mad Magazine's "Raven", by Bill Elder (also reprint). Fanzine reviews are next. They reprint covers, strips, and art work from reviewed zines. Also includes prices and addresses. It informs you of European conventions and European underground comics. Final point of note is the mention of Jose Fayos' Zine-Zone (he is apparently the distributor of Comic Crusader, too.)

Charlie continues with eleven pages of Li'l Abner reprints and then a one-page piece of art of a girl talking to a snail. Then there is a facinating bit of graphic story, entitled "couple". Each panel enlarges to a point where a second emerges from the first one. The story-line is exceptional, even though there isn't any dialogue. Its done by Barbe. Reprints of Krazy Kat and Mutt and Jeff follow. A weird letter column is next, followed by a page of fanzine ads. There's also a page from the sketchbook of an artist named Buzzelis.

There are a few exceptional pieces which have appeared in single issues. They include Burne Hogarth's Miracle Jones reprints, reprints of CANADIAN WHITE (comics from the 1940's from Canada), and reprints of the Patriote. Also in other issues have been Barbe's Ombres en ete, and Les Labyrithes by Buzzelli. Both are fabulous strips.

However, most Europeans seem more interested in Pilote. It's the Marvel or DC of Europe. The most fantastic thing in Pilote is the fact that Phil Druillet likes to work for them. This issue contains six pages of his truly unbelievable stuff. He is a genius of great magnitude. The latest issue sports tremendous extravaganza done in late 1970. It's entitled "Terre". The artwork is twenty times better than anything Marvel or National has put out in years. The coloring is unreal. Each detail is so fine, yet it does not appear overloaded in the slightest. It is sheer genius, and appears in the color section.

Another big section is a large humor area containing strips. Also, Pilote devotes a large page count to charicatures of French President Pompidou. Some are extraordinary full page jobs, which others utilize a very strange technique. Asterix le Gaulois appears and takes up two pages. (ed. Note: An American translation is available for $3 in hardback form. Good stuff. -JB)

Pilote runs work of many excellent artists. Loro is one, doing "Eye of God". Clave is another, he being a cross of Adams and Williamson. Vance is another, doing an English s-f strip, BOB MORANE. All on slick paper to enhance the beauty.

Comments are welcomed:

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SCI-FI AND FANTASY

BY JOE THOMASINO

Kismet?

Kismet, or as all you movie buffs know, pate or rather three fates play the title roles in the novel THE MIDNIGHT DANCERS, by Gerard F. Conway. The Bates Floater Man, our editor, tells me that the author's a retread, a comic book writer now attempting to write reasonable science-fiction. The above note was a little bait to entice you funny papers fiends to waste your time on some reasonable form of liturature, rather than those lurid comic magazines which form you current diet. Greek mythology buffs will also get a tingle out of this treatment of those terrible garment workers, the spinners of the yarn of life.

In this novel we are faced with a typical plot line. The hero, Saul, sets out to regain his wife, and in the quest discovers himself and a way to save his people. This story is set on a world appropriately named World. The inhabitants, decendants of an earth colony founded several centuries back, live in a primitive hunting-agricultural society. They are governed by a strict semi-religious code, which by the time our story is taking place, is losing support and credence with the people. The basis of this faith is the belief that one must fight the "fates". One must not take the easy or obvious way out and generally make sure one is doing his own arduous thing. Apparently, this faith is well-founded since we discover that the fates (Old Klotho Lachesis and Atropos themselves, no less) are actual beings living in a parallel universe and they have gone mad. Due to this bout of inter-celestial looniness, all of the homes of man are also going insane because they do not buck the "fates" but follow their crazed will. Only on World, where people still oppose the "fates" does sanity still reign. To this dreary and to my mind dull, though sane, society comes the semi-mythical, almost god-like figure, the Walker. This being steals away Saul's somewhat estranged wife, Davina and thus sets off the first or as they call it here, the hunt. This forms the core of THE MIDNIGHT DANCERS. Eventually, Saul, tight-lipped, very strong and proud, who is going insane and thus is on the brink of bringing insanity to his people, catches up with the Walker. He finds the "fates" in the process and also the natures of the powerful Walkers who are, surprize! surprize!, androids. Finally , Saul regains his sense of balance, laughs at the fates and temporarily disrupts their activities, and leads his people to a new world after his actions on the hunt help destroy the old one.

This story is told in first person style with occasional insights into the thinking of the other characters besides Saul. However, the story is lacking something. The missing ingredients are excitement and suspense. The long hunt is more dull than terrifying. The adventurous encounters with giant bats, land slides, underwater escapades and a trip through the "fold vortex web" are merely endured by the reader rather than participated in and enjoyed. The whole novel fails to catch the imagination and identification of the reader, and leaves one cold. Although the workmanship is sound, the work is without flavor or zest, like a mash potato hero sandwich. This book can definitely be put down, even in its livelier moments. Mr. Conway will have to combine his imaginative plot twists and backrounds, plus his genuinely worhtwhile insights into human relationships with some old fashioned action-excitement and gusto to make his science-fiction efforts a success . Any and all attempts in this direction would lead one to recommend his work considerably more heartily than one would recommend the MIDNIGHT DANCERS. Mr. Conway may be a comer in this field, but some spice is really necessary if he is to buck the fates and become a real science-fiction writer of any note.

Next issue, writer Thomasino reviews FURTHEST by Suzette Haden Elgin. It's another one he disfavors because of it's intergalactic James Bond take-offs.

MIDNIGHT DANCERS is copyright c, 1971 by Gerard F. Conway. 75¢. 221 pages. It is published by ACE BOOKS, 1120 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036. All rights reserved. Cover by Davis Meltzer.

NEXT ISSUE

CFM 3 READY OCT. 22

* *Full scale review of the NEW YORK CULTURAL CENTER comics exhibit. Photo and text report. Long & detailed with a lot of rare stuff photographed*

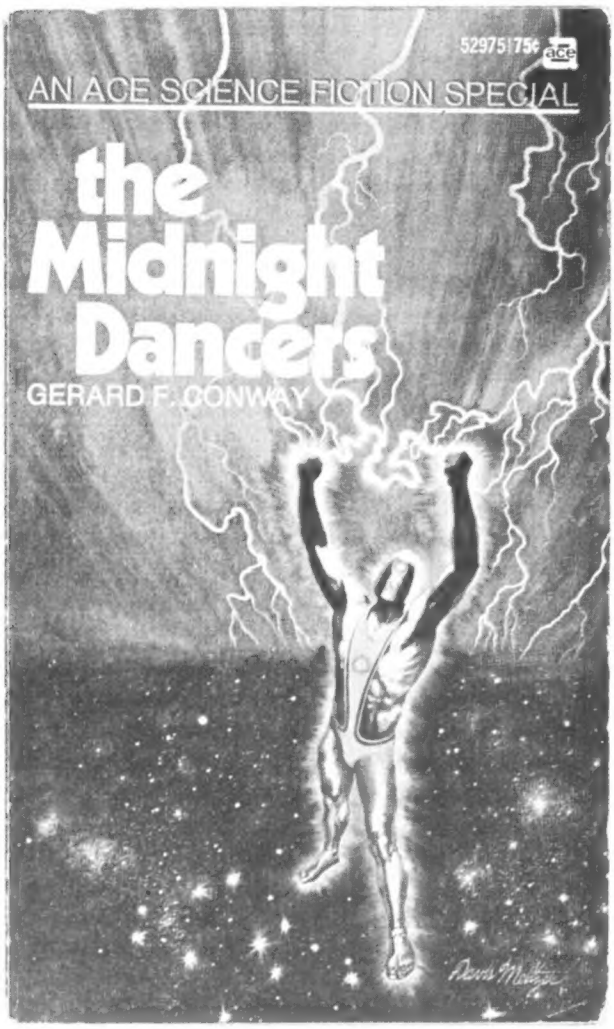
* *Wally Stoelting takes a comics fan look at NOREASCON, the world science-fiction con. It's offbeat, like you've never seen!*

* *Tony Isabella's 2 page newspaper article , on GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW drug story . Unless you got the CLEVELAND PLAIN DEA- you'll miss the story.*

* *Steve Jenkins' "What if they gave a Con, & nobody came?" Tongue-in-cheek, foot-in mouth look at a cancelled CENTRAL PARK award and display of newspaper strips.*

* *Long letter column with a whole batch of love and hate letters.*

* *Plus our ten regular columnists, too!*



JACH SPAKE

STRETCHING THE PLAS...

The tongue in cheek comedy antics of the Plastic Man in DC SPECIAL #15 were well received by this writer. With DC"s search for good selling and interesting reprints, they have delved into the files of a character that they bought off another company: Plastic Man of Quality Comics. Artistically speaking, many elements of Will Eisner's SPIRIT appear in Jack Cole's work, resulting in a fast-moving, well-drawn strip; the epitome of a comedy strip and superhero strip cross-breeded. (Ed. Note: All of Quality's artwork bore Eisner resemblences. It was company policy. Most used were Eisner's heavy shading and deep folds.-JB) Even though the DC Plastic Man of the 1960's failed as the comedy angle was overplayed, it's good to see the Quality Plas' and to know that more of his adventures are forthcoming in a DC SUPER SPECTACULAR.

DRUGS AND COMICS

The Green Lantern/Green Arrow relevancy series continues as Speedy goes through cold turkey. Nowhere will you find a super-hero merely talking about the cold facts of drug addiction in this series. Instead, the readers are provided with scenes of Speedy experiencing the torturous pains of withdrawal and being abandoned, a confederate of his his dying from an overdose. These are far more communicative than having a "straight" adult super-hero trying to rap about drugs. These days, one cannot expect hero-worship alone to sell an idea. After all, who can believe a superhero; a king of being one can never be.

It was a far better choice for Speedy (who is indeed quite like those the story is directed at) to come out, rap about the subject, and present Oliver Quinn with an unexpected, hard right to the jaw for deserting him in the hour of his greatest need. If you aren't into drugs and/or relevancy, then you should pick up a copy of GL #86 for it's hard line of writing and artistry by Denny O'Neil, Dick Giordano and Neal Adams.

AND IN CONCLUSION...

Then there's COMIC FANDOM MONTHLY, a fanzine that's trying desperately to re-new an old idea of, "Hey let's put out an interesting comics oriented magazine that's monthly..." and succeeding.

It reads like a discussion magazine, but it isn't one. It reads like one of those text-oriented fanzines, but it isn't. There are no discussions. There are no "one topic" articles, just a group of people expressing their views to a responsive audience.

FROM

comic fandom monthly

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THIS WAS MAILED

3RD class mail

to:

YOUR SUB ENDS WITH ISSUE NO.

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